

March 8, 2023

Dear Members of Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Cliff O'Callahan and I live in Guilford, and work in Middletown Connecticut. I support Senate Bill No. 1178: An Act Expanding Connecticut Paid Sick Days.

I am a general pediatrician who has worked in Middletown for over 20 years as a faculty in the residency program at Middlesex. I am Chair of Pediatrics and Director of the Nurseries in the hospital. I serve as the Middletown school districts School Medical Advisor. More than 65% of my patients are on Husky.

I am privileged to have sick time in order to care for myself and my family but that is not the case for so many of my patients and their parents. I continue to see parents who delay having their child seen for an illness or injury because they don't have the ability to take time off and then it can often get worse.

I immediately think of the single mother with multiple children who is working and can not bring her daughter in for another bout of wheezing that results that evening in an emergency room visit followed by hospital admission, again. This is traumatic for the child and parent and expensive for our medical system.

There are many such stories. All kinds of minor ills but also more severe issues like asthma, ADHD, developmental or behavioral problems, depression and anxiety – delays only make the situation worse. Poorly addressed mood issues in childhood lead to lifelong challenges that affect adult functionality and healthcare expenses.

Ultimately, it makes economic and medical and ethical sense for us to support all families with paid leave.

I speak for myself and my faculty colleagues and the residents when I say that we strongly support the expansion of paid sick days in our state. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote favorably this year to strengthen Connecticut's paid sick leave law.

I appreciate your attention to this issue

Cliff O'Callahan, MD, PhD, FAAP

Middletown and Guilford, CT